

**PARENT / TEACHER  
CONFERENCES**

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

We are more than halfway through the school year and it has been extremely rewarding for me to watch your children mature and grow academically and socially as the year has progressed. I firmly believe that middle school years are among the most developmentally important in a person's life, years in which schools need to provide critical supports to pre-adolescents as they transition from the structure of elementary school to the independence and self-sufficiency required to be successful in high school and beyond.

According to the National Education Association, during the period of early adolescence (ages 11-16), the body experiences more physical changes than it has since infancy, changes that can be confusing for the adolescents as they strive to fit in socially and be successful academically. At Illing, we are committed to providing all students with rigorous and engaging academic experiences while also supporting them socially and emotionally throughout these transitional years.

It is extremely important to me to ensure that Illing is a safe, supportive and welcoming community for all students, parents and staff members. I am committed to fostering a positive school climate and have no tolerance for mean spirited behaviors. We are excited to introduce a campaign called "Cool to be Kind", a program that promotes thoughtfulness, empathy and intolerance for mean spirited behaviors. This program will consist of a variety of assemblies, speakers and activities that will communicate

Conferences will take place on March 10th and March 11th. These will be **early release** days for students and conferences will be held during fifteen minute intervals. Explanatory letters and sign-up slips were mailed home but if you need another form, please do not hesitate to call the main office at 860-647-3400. You may schedule your conference by returning the form to your child's homeroom teacher.

**HOME ACCESS IS  
AVAILABLE TO ALL  
STUDENTS!**

**HAC ALLOWS PARENTS  
& STUDENTS TO ACCESS  
GRADES**

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

**AND ATTENDANCE.**

Call 860-647-5085 for  
assistance if needed.

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK CONT'D

the expectation and importance of kindness and respect. On Tuesday, 2/24/15, a group called Hip Pickles will visit Illing to kick off this campaign with an assembly that will be followed up with reflective mini-lessons stressing the importance of treating others with respect and compassion. A “Cool to be Kind” link will soon be displayed on our website that showcases activities and events that are part of this program along with anti-bullying resources for parents, students and educators.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly by emailing me at [b11bhaye@mpspride.org](mailto:b11bhaye@mpspride.org) or calling 860-647-3404. I also encourage you to share school improvement ideas and let me know about positive things you and your children experience at Illing.

With warm regards,  
Beth Hayes, Interim Principal





## TEAM SYRACUSE

Happy New Year to all from Team Syracuse!

The excitement of the second half of grade 8 is just beginning for us and for our students. Very soon, we will be visiting Manchester High School to hear about elective options for each student, recommending academic levels for high school classes, and planning end-of-the-year activities. School activities are running at full speed, with Syracuse students involved in both girls' and boys' basketball, wrestling, Invention Convention, Science Club, Family and Consumer Sciences Club, Latin Dance, Science Bowl, Student Council, National Junior Honor Society, and Poetry Club, just to name a few. Chromebooks are now an integral part of our team, with all teachers running Google Classrooms that students can sign on to from home using their school log-in information. A significant percentage of assignments are now completed electronically and graded the same way, and we are all learning new ways to integrate technology into our lives every day.

With the start of 2015, the teachers and staff of Team Syracuse are making a resolution to empower our students to be prepared for the next chapter of their lives at the high school level. Please support them by helping them to be equipped for school. This means that they **MUST HAVE WRITING UTENSILS**. Both pens and pencils are important to have every day. Every student must have a planner. If your child has lost his or hers, please contact the guidance office to get them a new one. The same goes for school IDs. Each student must have an ID. New IDs can be purchased in the office for \$5.00.

As always, we continue to strive for academic excellence. Please encourage students to complete homework and projects every night. Homework Club continues to be offered every Monday and Thursday from 2:55-3:55 with no advance notice needed. To be eligible for a bus pass, each student must report to the club immediately after dismissal. Late arrivals will not be allowed entry.

Every teacher is available by telephone (860-647-3400) or through email at any time. We love to hear from you, so feel free to contact us with your questions or comments.

We wish you peace and warmth in 2015.

Ms. Marciniak, Mr. Burkhardt, Mr. Lang, Mrs. Gay, Mr. Pohl, Mrs. Harlow, and Ms. Bedlack



## TEAM CENTRAL

### **Army Warrior Ethos**

*I will always place the mission first.*

*I will never accept defeat.*

*I will never quit.*

*I will never leave a fallen comrade.*

Students have been working diligently in Mr. Morsbach's language arts classes to sharpen their reading and writing skills. Students have just completed Quarter 2 which focused on the interpretation of poetry as a reading focus, and the careful selection of words and development of a "voice" as a writing focus. During quarter 3, students will carefully read and analyze non fiction. They are being taught to not only summarize and comprehend the information they read, but to think about it critically. The goal is that they read these articles to not only gain new information, but are also reading closely and critically to determine bias, misinformation, and ultimately form their own unique stances and opinions. Their writing will revolve around creating pieces which are full of interesting, relevant, and validated ideas. This unit also focuses on using proper conventions. Students are working as editors, sharpening their eye for grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors. Help them by modeling how you yourself double check for proper conventions. Watching a parent apply the skills will really hit home. And if your child corrects your own grammar, be sure to give them a pat on the back for me, in addition to the annoyed look that might come naturally!

Ms. Burdacki's language arts classes have teamed up with Mrs. Bombria's classes on Team Tufts in writing six-word memoirs over the last few weeks. Using Google drawings, students created posters for their six-word memoirs. Mrs. Zappula in the media center is creating a video montage of all students' memoirs, which will be showcased next week. Congratulations to the eighteen blue-ribbon winners for their outstanding six-word memoirs! We will be starting the novel *A Long Walk to Water*, in conjunction with the social studies department next week. Continue to encourage your children to read 20-30 minutes a night at home! Thank you for all that you do!

Mrs. Werner reports that students are currently studying the human body. We are nearly finished with the musculo-skeletal system. You should have heard lots of correct anatomical names being tossed around over the past several weeks. Coming up are the Circulatory, Respiratory, and Digestive systems. For the first time, students will be taking a full Human Body test at the end of the unit. This is a requirement of all seventh grade students and means that they won't be able to forget things after they have a quiz. A study guide will be provided and review time will be given in class. Watch those planners for further information.

Mr. Meneffe hopes you enjoyed the winter break and all the snow we received. I can't believe the total accumulation and there is still more to come. I guess it is one of those many benefits of living in a humid continental climate:) We have just finished our journey of Africa and its rich ancient history and culture. We are about to immerse ourselves in the physical and cultural geography of China, Mongolia and Taiwan. I anticipate your child is going to have a grand time learning about the various people of this region. As the Spring season approaches, keep encouraging your child to strive for success.

Mr. Moore, the math teacher, reports that the year has been going great so far and things are moving along very smoothly. We just finished up our Geometry Unit in which the kids have been learning how we use angle measure, area and volume of 2D and 3D shapes in order to solve real world and mathematical problems. The kids really liked the topics in which we explored! Their attitudes and effort is still at the high standards in which we all hold them to!

Some of the ELL students on Team Cornell and Team Central are participating in a project funded by a grant from EastConn in Hampton. We will going to the Conn College Arboretum to take photographs, and then to Lyman Allen Art Museum on Friday , February 27, 2015. The project is called New Images and focuses on how a photograph tells a story. All ELL students have been participating in the annual State mandated English Language Proficiency Testing. Tests are due to the State on March 1, and results should be back in the Spring.



## TEAM PRINCETON

The first thing we'd like to do is welcome our additional special education teacher, Ms. Jennifer Baker. [Here is a little note from her:](#)

My name is Jennifer Baker, and I am a new special education teacher working with both Teams Princeton and Syracuse. I started at Illing right after winter break. I was previously a special education tutor at Simsbury High School. I will be co-teaching with teachers on these teams and helping all students reach their potential! I look forward to getting to know all the students and making the rest of the year as helpful and enjoyable as I can for them before they head off to high school next year! Feel free to contact me at [jbaker@mpspride.org](mailto:jbaker@mpspride.org) if you have any questions.

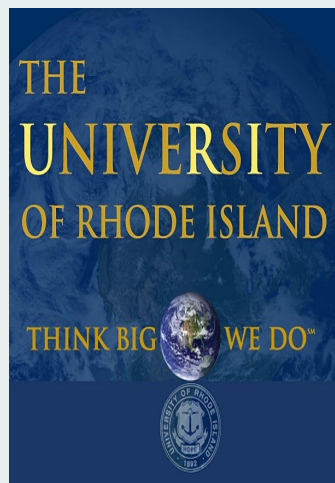
Next, team Princeton Connected Math students are busy discovering how to graph and write linear equations. They began their journey by learning about slope and will quickly be diving deeper into linear relationships. Algebra is finishing their exploration of relations and functions and will then be moving onto recursive and explicit functions.

Also, team Princeton Science students are getting into high gear for the CMT's! We are continuing to investigate Forces and Motion, and we are looking forward to discovering how gravity keeps the planets orbiting the sun. We will also observe how the motion of the Earth, Moon, and Sun helps to create the seasons and phases of the moon that we experience. To help review for the CMT's, we have recently signed the kids up for Study Island, a program which will help them review the content from their last three years of science.

In U.S. History, after studying the American Revolution, one of our greatest stories ever, we proved that with perseverance and determination, just about anything is possible. After the hard work of defeating the British is done, we have an equally difficult and important task – forming a government. We will find that it is not an easy task at all. Classes have been examining the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation and the need to create a document that would better address the needs of our new nation. What followed was a series of heated debates and compromises that eventually led to the foundation of our government – our Constitution.

Last, Language Arts teachers are using this quarter to explore big ideas (theme and main idea). We are reading [The Giver](#) by Lois Lowry, which takes place in a dystopian society. We will discuss big ideas about what makes a perfect society, if one is possible and explore what happens in a society when people decide they are unhappy. Through each chapter, students will receive instruction on grasping and communicating main ideas through writing summaries. As well, we will identify and discuss important life themes where students will be required to use evidence from the novel to support their ideas. Please continue to encourage your child to read at home as three novels are to be read by the end of this quarter and each student will be required to complete three mini-projects on those books.





## TEAM URI

URI would like to congratulate Mackenzie Scales on advancing to Final Round of the School Wide Geography Bee. In Geography, students will be assessed soon using the document-based model to conclude their unit on Africa.

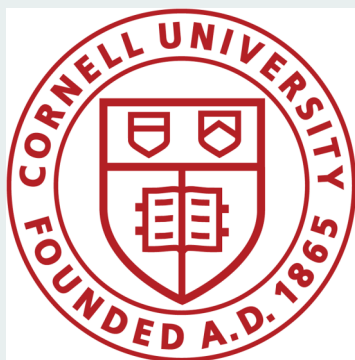
Ms. Kapa would like parents and guardians to know that students have begun the Life Science Unit. They are building a model of a cross-section of a cell. Next, they will begin their Feel the Beat projects and body system unit.

In math, students are finishing up the 2D and 3D geometry unit. They will be moving on to rates, ratios and proportions, which will include lots of hands-on applications.

For Ms. O. and Ms. Z., students are finishing up their memoir unit. They have been assigned their next book report. Look on the website to find out more.

Team teachers would also like to congratulate Battle of the Books students for advancing to the next round.

## TEAM CORNELL



**Mr. Bebyn's Social Studies** classes are exploring the various battles and events of the American Revolution. We have also examined the writing of the Declaration of Independence and analyzed its three main ideas. Our next unit will explore the creation of the United States Constitution and how it exists in our lives today. Congratulations to **Joseph Bouchie** from Team Cornell for winning the Illing Middle School Geography Bee. We will now see if he qualifies for the state competition! Way to go Joe! Email: [b21dbeby@mpspride.org](mailto:b21dbeby@mpspride.org)

**Mrs. Brisee's Math** classes are continuing to study linear equations. We have learned how to solve multi-step equations, determined slope and are now graphing and learning about all the parts of the linear equation. The Algebra class is studying functions. The students have completed their first midterm exam with wonderful results! Congrats! Mrs. Brisee is available most days after school and in the morning before school begins. Math students who are finding the material challenging should plan to come for extra help. Email: [b25c-bris@mpspride.org](mailto:b25c-bris@mpspride.org)

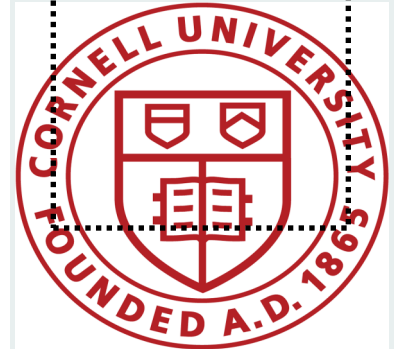
# TEAM CORNELL CONT'D

Why do we look the way we do? As students in **Mrs. Schneider's Science** classes begin the search for our differences starting at the cellular level, we will discover all kinds of interesting information in our cells, genes and chromosomes. Students will compare the function of organelles in the living cell with something they understand. Look for more projects and independent learning on our chromebooks and computers at home. Questions? Check Team Cornell Website for Science Homework and Useful Websites or email [b21vschn@mpspride.org](mailto:b21vschn@mpspride.org) Science RULES!

**Mrs. Gohla's Language Arts** classes have wrapped up a unit on poetry and figurative language. We are now studying nonfiction texts with a focus on main idea and summarizing. Students are utilizing the website NewsELA to find nonfiction articles to read, find the main idea, and summarize. There will be several student-choice projects in this unit. We will be reading The Giver as our next novel and focus on what it means to live in a "perfect world". Students are welcome to stay after school or before school to work or for extra help, but please make an appointment with Mrs. Gohla first. Reminder: All students should be reading a minimum of twenty minutes every night and filling out a bookmark for homework due every other Friday. Email: [b21knich@mpspride.org](mailto:b21knich@mpspride.org)

In **Ms. Botting's Language Arts** class, after wrapping up our Poetry and Figurative Language unit, the students are moving into an argument writing unit centered around The Giver. This book is extremely thought-provoking and should help spark excellent discussions and lively debate! Remember to encourage independent reading with your student. It is the best way for them all to practice and reinforce the skills they are developing and refining in class.

Some of the **ELL** students on Team Cornell who work with **Mrs. Parra** are participating in a project funded by a grant from EastConn in Hampton. We will go to the Conn College Arboretum to take photographs, and then to Lyman Allen Art Museum on Friday February 27, 2015. The Project is called New Images and focuses on how a photograph tells a story. All ELL students have been participating in the annual State mandated English Language Proficiency Testing. Tests are due to the State on March 1st and results should be back in the Spring.



# TEAM TUFTS



Team Tufts would like to give a big “thank you” to all the parents who were able to participate in our conference experience in November. We look forward to seeing you again in March to share in your student’s success.

Team Tufts geographers had a great time earning bonus points, homework passes, and other treats playing Chinese Bingo. We may also have learned the Chinese numeral characters one through fifty in a fun and painless way.

Students continue to learn about the diversity of the African continent and the challenges its people must face. We will discuss Africa’s history, current economic and political climate, and the impact of geography on such a vast continent. Students will use their knowledge to determine if colonialism has had a positive or negative effect on Africa.

Prepare yourselves, students will be coming home shortly practicing their interviewing skills again as they survey you on your feelings about China and the Chinese Zodiac. This is the Year of the Goat!

We wish a Happy New Year to all our Team Tufts families. All of us look forward to the new year with hopes of success for each and every one of your sons and daughters. Please remember to keep lines of communication open between home and school. Encourage your children to continue using their planners. We appreciate everything you do for our students. Thank you again for your support.

## December/January Newsletter

Mrs. Bombria’s Reading and Language Arts classes have been very busy! Classes have been working on their SIR books and individualized reading goals and strategies for reading comprehension and increasing our writing skills. All the students are becoming more confident in their figurative language skills. Students have been enjoying and using text to appreciate elements of literature, the use of figurative language and summarizing. Students have been assessing actions of the characters and sharing insights, as well as supporting evidence, to convince their classmates of their opinions. We have seen much success throughout the on-going practice.

(Reminder, all students are required to read a minimum of 20++++ minutes/monthly average goals - every night.)

The Family History Museum interviews are being conducted and we will be moving forward to details and elaboration to make their interviews into paragraph and story format. They should reflect on family, family stories, traditions, and family artifacts (cherished memories). Over the holidays is a perfect time to chat with family about family, culture, and traditions. Have fun reminiscing and sharing your past with your children. Please encourage your child to continue to inquire about family and traditions / complete the 10 interview questions. These will be used in our on-going research for the Family History Museum project.



# TEAM TUFTS CONT'D

Mrs. Bombria's classes are continuing their studies through fiction, non fiction articles and their SIR novels. Using these texts as a foundation, we are examining figurative language, literary elements, theme, and making connections, as well as brushing up on comprehension strategies. We will continue our most recent unit of study, "Reading Informational Texts and Argument Writing" in the coming months. One way to assist your child with this unit is to practice this skill- in and out of the classroom- using evidence to support their arguments. Our writing focus has been on the importance of excellent word choice and voice, as well as ideas and conventions.

Just a reminder... **there is homework every night!** In addition to other assignments, your child is required to read 20++ minutes every evening. If students are reading each night for 45-60 minutes without losing concentration, they will be that much closer to successfully being ready for staying on tasks and being able to apply focus to the tasks ahead of them. Your assistance in providing quiet reading areas and encouragement continue to be greatly appreciated.

***Remember to have your child check their grades from home:***

***HAC***

***Students have their username and password to access this site from home.***

With the flu season upon us, I would like to stress the importance of staying healthy and being ready to give 100%. Getting plenty of rest and eating a healthy, substantial breakfast, along with receiving positive words of encouragement, can help your child reach his/her full potential.

Our Family History Museum date is quickly approaching. Please continue to work with your children at home on their family history. We will be creating poems, stories, and presentations for students to share the evening of the event as well as to take home. It is always a special evening together. We look forward to seeing you and celebrating our diverse families!

During the month of February, students in Ms. Gill's class read *The Well*, a work of historical fiction written by Mildred Taylor. They will participate in an in-class symposium, or guided graded discussion, on the book which will encourage them to address poignant themes contained in the text. Throughout the Mildred Taylor unit, students will continue to practice answering open-ended questions and enhance their vocabulary. In January, the students finished a unit about figurative language, including the study of poems by Robert Frost, Langston Hughes, Emily Dickinson, and Edgar Allen Poe, among others. Ms. Gill's class also has been improving their comprehension of informational texts through the exploration of articles about current events topics. Soon, we will be reading about the fascinating life of Malala Yousafzai. Students will be able to utilize multimedia websites that include audio aids, artistic interpretation, video interviews, and interactive timelines to learn in-depth information about this young crusader for education and equal rights.

## TEAM TUFTS CONT'D



Team Tufts math students just finished wrapping up the unit on geometry. We are now going to work on ratios, proportions and unit rates. We will be discussing sales tax and unit rates. Please feel free to have your student determine the sales tax, tips at restaurants, and discount prices. We will be working on real life problems involving such activities. Pre-Algebra is working on the geometry unit with volume of 3D shapes and exploring the formulas.

Students are recommended to have a simple calculator that they may use in class and at home. Also, having a good supply of pencils, erasers and a sharpener will help them be prepared for class. After school help is available on Mondays (other arrangements may be accommodated, if necessary).

Due to so many unexpected interruptions (SNOW DAYS), Team Tufts geographers continue to explore Africa, discussing its rich culture and history and analyzing its many challenges. We look forward to studying the culture of China and experiencing a taste of what living in China is like. Students will begin to understand the answer to the frequently asked question, "Why are we studying China?" We will be discussing the sayings of Confucius while we analyze the freedoms of living in a democracy with the challenges of living in the largest Communist country in the world.

Prepare yourselves, students will be coming home shortly practicing their interviewing skills again as they survey you on your feelings about China and the Chinese Zodiac. This is the Year of the Goat!

Our team teachers look forward to this new year with hopes of success for each and every one of your sons and daughters. Thank you for sharing your children with us. Please remember to keep lines of communication open between home and school. Encourage your children to use their planners daily. We appreciate everything you do for our students and look forward to seeing you in March to participate in our conference experience. Thank you again for your support.

## TEAM YALE

Hello Team Yale Family!!! Happy New Year!!!

**In Mr. Parker's** classes, students have been super busy learning how to define, identify and create figurative language and have also been analyzing a variety of poetry within their CRAFT and STRUCTURE learning unit! In addition, students have done a fantastic job of applying what they have learned about figurative language, as well as craft and structure, by creating their own poetry! Students have also been actively reading Bronx Masquerade and have worked hard on strengthening their written response to literature. Furthermore, students have worked on strengthening their writing skills through applying the writing process to a memorable moment snapshot writing project, as well as an argumentative essay. As we move forward, we will continue to build our reading skills through actively reading a variety of text, and zone in on strengthening our writing through studying voice, word choice, fluency and organization and actively participating in the writing process! QUICK REMINDERS: Read! Read! Read!

"The person you make fun of today can be the person who saves your life tomorrow."



## TEAM YALE CONT'D

**In Ms. Kotler's** Science classes, the 7th grade just finished learning about Work, Force, and Energy. Students could be seen in the hallways shooting straw rockets from toilet paper tube launchers. They are now starting to learn about cells, which will lead them to learn about body systems.

The 8<sup>th</sup> science grade classes are learning about Newton's Laws of Motion. Soon, they will be seen in the hallway, also, having fun while learning. Spoiler Alert! They will be racing balloon cars.

All students took a mid-year assessment of their science skills. Many students showed an improvement over the initial assessment in October.

**In Mr. Diaz's 7th grade Language Arts class**, students are crafting memoirs and incorporating the writing traits of voice and word choice. Students are also reading and analyzing models of memoirs, which serve as mentor texts for the students to use as inspirations for ideas and effective writing techniques.

**In Mr. Diaz's 8th grade Language Arts class**, students are reading excerpts from the novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and analyzing it for the author's use of voice and word choice, as well as examining the theme of social justice as it pertains to the experiences of the Native American narrator in the story.

**In Ms. Hoynes'** mathematics, 7th graders are currently finishing up their 2 and 3-D geometry unit. Students have been working with identifying shapes and finding the volume of different 3-D shapes. 7th grade students will be moving into proportional reasoning, where scales and real world applications will be investigated.

In 8th grade mathematics, students are currently entering the steep and slippery world of slope. All 8th grade students will be discovering how to find, identify and write the slope of lines. Students will be interpreting information from lines, as well as drawing lines from given equations.

**In Mr. Vickers'** Social Studies classes, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students have started learning about the Constitution. We will be spending the next weeks learning about the structure of our government, the system of checks and balances built into the Constitution, our rights and responsibilities, and, my personal favorite, the Bill of Rights.

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, we are finishing our study of Africa. In our next unit, we will turn to Southwest Asia: oil, violence, and religion. This unit sparks a lot of discussion about current events. Watch for newspaper articles and television reports about the region and engage your child in conversation. They can bring their insights into class discussions.

# TEAM DARTMOUTH



Team Dartmouth's weekly Homework Club is in full swing every Thursday from 2:45 p.m. until 3:45 p.m. Have your student join us to catch up on missing assignments, re-take a low quiz/test, get extra help from a teacher, or work to get ahead. There is a late bus available.

Mrs. Kalt's and Ms. Nobilio's classes are reading the novel A Long Walk to Water. This novel, based on a true story, takes place in Sudan and is part of our interdisciplinary unit on Africa. The essential question for the novel, that you could discuss with your child, is how do individuals survive in challenging environments. A new writing program has been rolled out this year. Students are learning about and applying the following six traits to their writing: ideas, word choice, voice, sentence fluency, organization and conventions. Currently, we're focusing on word choice and voice as they experiment with writing memoirs.

Mrs. Martindale's math class is finishing up their *looong winter unit on 2D and 3D geometry*. *The next two units are proportional reasoning, and statistics. The next time you are out shopping, have your student calculate the sale price from a discount or the tip on a restaurant bill!* Mrs. Martindale's pre-algebra class finished their unit on Pythagoras and is close to finishing their 2D and 3D geometry unit. *They will also visit the world of discounts, tax, and tip during proportional relationships. After proportional relationships, they will be learning about linear relationships.*

Science class with Mr. Schardt just kicked off a unit on the body human. Hey, your epidermis is showing! (ha! ha!) Please inquire about what system of the body your child is learning about, and who knows, we may have a future doctor in the making. Check the home access site regularly to keep track of your child's progress.

Round out your child's daily life by getting them outdoors often to enjoy good winter fun. I am tentatively planning a seal watching adventure aboard a research boat this March. It would be a Saturday excursion, just the cure for cabin fever. More to come!

Mrs. Avakian reports: In social studies, we had a highly competitive preliminary round of competition to qualify for the National Geographic Bee. Our semi finalists were Sam Minor, Olivia McHugh, Eric Tann, Tysean Bass and Gio Martinez. Our finalist, Gio Martinez, went on to compete in the school-wide competition! Brush up on your geography with your student and explore The National Geographic website, which has new practice questions everyday. Check it out at [www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee/quiz/today](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee/quiz/today). We continue to incorporate our geography skills as we explore the geography and culture of Africa. Specifically, we will be participating in activities to enrich our understanding of Sudan and the novel being read in language arts, A Long Walk to Water. In January, we also celebrated and learned about Martin Luther King, Jr. Shortly thereafter, we will begin our unit on the Middle East which will include current events work.

## TEAM DARTMOUTH CONT'D

In math we are beginning our longest unit of the year. Our 2D and 3D geometry unit will last us almost through the winter! It encompasses lines, angles, triangles, and circles with area and perimeter. The second half focuses on surface area and volume of three dimensional figures. Get ready to use and apply equations. In pre-algebra, we have a pair of short units coming up. We are learning about the Pythagorean Theorem and how to apply it to real world situations. Following that, we are going deep into ratios, proportions, and percentages. So next time you eat dinner out, ask your student to calculate the tip! Remind your students to keep up with their nightly homework because you will be seeing it regularly again. The math department has adopted a new retake policy on unit tests. Any student can retake a unit test if they score lower than 75%. Both the retake and the original will be averaged for a replacement grade; however, the replacement grade cannot be higher than 75%.

## TEAM UCONN



Team UCONN has many wonderful events happening in the near future. Within the next few weeks, we will have a town meeting to recognize those students who made Honor Roll during the second quarter. When the date is chosen, a notice will be sent home. In addition to these events, each teacher has new units and opportunities for all students. In Math, students are learning about the slope of a line and about graphing and solving linear equations. For February, Ms. Nunez's science classes are studying the unit on heredity and evolution. We will start off with a DNA extraction lab to launch us into cell reproduction through mitosis and meiosis, then further moving us into the workings of genetic material transfer. Right now in Ms. Cocola's class we are starting our non fiction unit. We are working on our note taking, citation and argument writing skills in this unit. Students will be able to choose articles and a non fiction book that they are interested in to work with on a project as well. In Mr. Kienle's class, students will begin their study of the Holocaust. Remember that some of the subject matter is difficult to see sometimes. If any parents have concerns I should know about, please do not hesitate to contact me here at Illing. We will be reading the novel Night by Elie Wiesel in Literature Circles here in class. Social Studies classes on Team UCONN are delving into the formation of America's first attempts at government, ultimately ending with the creation of the United States Constitution. Social studies classes will examine the current United States government, and what it means to be a good citizen.



# FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

Mrs. Pickett is busy organizing the third annual Illing Healthy Chef Contest. This event is open to all Illing cooks who are interested in learning new skills and creating healthy food. This year's theme is "Meatless Meals". Many nutritionists and scientists tell us eating a few meatless meals each week is good for us. Take a look at why:

Health Reasons:

- ◇ Help reduce your risk of certain kinds of cancer
- ◇ Help reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes
- ◇ Help maintain a healthy weight
- ◇ Improve your diet by filling up on more plant based foods
- ◇ Environmental reasons
- ◇ Reduce your "carbon footprint"
- ◇ Minimize water usage
- ◇ Reduce dependency on fossil fuel

So what will it be? Pasta and veggies? Rice and beans? Veggie burger? Veggie lasagna or quesadilla? There are a ton of ideas out there. For inspiration, check out [www.meatlessmonday.com](http://www.meatlessmonday.com)

Last year, we had Manchester's own restaurant owner Cory Wry as one of our judges and hope to have him again!



Ms. Stepanski's 8th graders are working hard on their power point presentation on one of the six nutrients. They will be presenting to the class after the winter break. The 7th graders are learning the basics of working in a kitchen. Today they enjoyed pancakes made from scratch! Don't forget the syrup! Any of Ms. Stepanski's students who cook at home and get a note from an adult about what they made can get bonus points added to their lab grade. So, encourage them to cook and send a note in to me!

# MUSIC DEPARTMENT



The Illing Music Department has many events to share with families.

Students are at the time of the year where new skills and techniques are being practiced towards mastery. Soon, concert season will be upon us, and our young musicians will be well prepared.

Here are some future upcoming music dates. Take note!

**February 11** the Illing Jazz Band participated in Jazz Fest at Manchester High School.

*Middle School and High School bands from all over the state performed and worked with clinicians and enjoyed each other's performances. To prepare for the day, the MHS Jazz Band came to Illing January 26 and sat side by side our Illing musicians. MHS Band Director Keith Berry worked with our young musicians and, together, the two groups performed for a portion of the student body. They sounded great! Check out the Illing website to take a look and listen!*

All-Eastern Region Festival **March 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>** at Rockville High School. Three Illing musicians were selected by audition to participate and perform: Sarah Turley, violin; Katherine Miner, viola; Emily Christensen, flute.

**March 20<sup>th</sup>** Boy's Choir, Girls' Choir and Illing Singers perform at the Wolfpack Game.  
5:30 in the Atrium, 7:00 pm on the ice.

Town wide Concerts at MHS' Bailey Auditorium: **April 7<sup>th</sup>** – Grade 5-12 ORCHESTRAS; **April 8<sup>th</sup>** – Grade 5-12 BANDS; **April 9<sup>th</sup>** – Grade 5 – 12 CHORUSES. These concerts are a great way to see our phenomenal music department at work, from the seeds of our young musicians all the way through their development into highly skilled musicians at the High School level.

*In conclusion, we welcome back Ms. Sica-Leonard, Orchestra Director, and are excited to hear the sounds of the Chamber Orchestra rehearse Monday and Wednesday mornings.*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR DECEMBER STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



Students pictured above were on a field trip to the Science Center

### Amanda Baranowski

Team Cornell selects Amanda Barnanowski, who is a hard worker and completes all of her assignments to the best of her ability. She goes above and beyond in the quality of the work she produces. Amanda is kind and genuine. She will greet you in the morning and always wishes you well at the end of the day. Amanda works well with her peers and you never hear a mean word out of her mouth. Amanda is a model citizen and student and fully deserves the honor of Cornell's Student of the Month.

### Elijah Bertrand

Team Syracuse selects Elijah Bertrand, a young man who puts forth his best effort in all school endeavors. He is a valued member of every class who contributes thoughtfully to class discussions and works diligently to complete assignments to the best of his ability. He has many varied interests and he shares them freely, especially his love of music. He plays the guitar both in school and out, and is a member of the cross-country and track team. Elijah exemplifies our Illing STARS in every way.

## DECEMBER STUDENTS OF THE MONTH CON'T

### Emily Christensen

Team Dartmouth and the Music Department select Emily Christensen. Emily is a very hard-working student and musician. She was recently accepted, by audition, into the Eastern Regional Middle School Concert Band as a flutist. She will represent Illing Middle School at a Festival Concert in March at Rockville High School with students from all over the Eastern Region of Connecticut. This achievement took a tremendous amount of individual effort and perseverance. For example, Emily comes in at least once a week before school to work on the challenging music for the festival. She is a very positive, enthusiastic, motivated student. Emily is on the road to becoming a very successful student and musician!

### Abby Fisher

Team UCONN selects Abby Fisher. Abby is an excellent, energetic student. She is always smiling and works her hardest on everything that she does. She is a positive influence on those around her and truly exemplifies what it means to be a STARS student.

### Jacob Haslett

Team Princeton selects Jacob Haslett. Jacob is a hard-working student who participates with enthusiasm and works well with others. A soccer player and member of the National Junior Honor Society, he is a leader each and every day in his classes. His attitude is positive, and he adds a cheerfulness to every lesson with his good sense of humor. Princeton teachers are very proud of Jacob!

### Katherine Miner

Team Central selects Katherine Miner, as she epitomizes what it means to be an upstanding Illing student. She is always present and prepared to begin the school day with a bright smile on her face. Her extracurricular activities include a myriad of endeavors. She enjoys reading, swimming and skiing in her free time. She loves to play the piano and viola. She also finds time to engage in Illing extracurricular activities including Cross Country, Track, Ski Club and Enrichment. She has worked very hard this school year and is full of pride of her accomplishments. Keep up the great work Katherine.

### Coleman Morson

Our Team Tufts student of the month is Coleman Morson. Cole is a very hard working and capable young man. His outstanding academic record earned him the honor roll for the first quarter. Cole shows respect and kindness for his teachers and peers on a daily basis. He never hesitates to help out a friend. As a talented musician, Cole shares his gift of music with the Illing community. Cole is truly a STARS student.

### Michael Rowe

Team URI selects Michael Rowe. Michael is a well-rounded student. He is a member of the basketball and soccer teams. Michael is an exemplar model of the STARS motto. He works well in groups as well as independently. Michael completes both homework and classwork in a timely manner.

# DECEMBER STUDENT OF THE MONTH CON'T

## Taniyah Ruiz

Team Yale selects Taniyah Ruiz, who is quite an amazing young lady! In the classroom she is responsible, respectful and safe! In addition, Taniyah puts a lot of effort into all of her assignments and often encourages her peers to do the same. Taniyah is a natural born leader and often uplifts other students she works with in her classes. Taniyah is a “hand-up-in-the-air” kind of student who is consistently eager to participate in class discussions, activities and assignments. In addition, Taniyah is packed full with VERVE and exudes a plethora of positive energy that would make Gandhi jealous! Because of all of the aforementioned qualities and so much more, we are proud to nominate Taniyah Ruiz for December’s Student of the Month!

## Beryl Chen

The Art Department selects Beryl Chen. Her artwork was submitted to the CEAE Scholastic Artwork Competition and she won a Silver Key award. Not all artwork is accepted to the show and very few actually win awards. Beryl’s dedication and hard work in art has served her well in creating a beautiful self-portrait that inspired more than Mr. LaFontaine, but the Scholastic Art Award committee. We are so proud of Beryl!

## Conor Williamson

Family and Consumer Science selects Conor Williamson for Student of the Month. I always look forward to seeing Conor and appreciate his effort to get things done. This year he was the first student in his class to complete his sewing project, a gym bag. Nothing can stand in his way when he wants to complete his work! He is always helpful and assists me throughout the class. Thank you, Conor, for being an Illing Star!

## TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

Illing Studios is finally operational, and we will begin producing a daily morning news program sometime in February. We are still looking for reporters for our after school program. Students will learn how to write, shoot and edit packages that will be broadcast during the morning news. If any students are interested in joining, they should see Mr. Spada in room 116.

Mr. Spada’s second semester Media Production class ended with students creating public service announcements about a topic that is important to them. These videos ranged in topics from anti-bullying, anti-smoking, acceptance, saying no to drugs, getting involved and more. Mr. Spada’s third semester classes have just started and students are learning the basics of editing and video production. Students will begin creating music videos in February.



# IS NEXT MONTH YOUR TURN TO BE STUDENT OF THE MONTH?

Become a STAR

**S**—Scholar—*is prepared / works hard / follows direction*



**T**—Truthful—*practices honesty / respects others' possessions*

**A**—Aware—*uses an indoor voice / kind & caring words / keeps hands & feet to him or herself*

**R**—Respectful—*makes good decisions when responding to adults / treats all property with respect / uses appropriate language*

**S**—Safe—*behaves appropriately / walks quietly in the halls / follows the bus rules at all times / follows all the posted rules for inside & outside of the building*



# JANUARY STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

## Kylene Andrulot

Kylene Andrulot is Team Central's student of the month. She epitomizes what it means to be an up-standing Illing student. She is always respectful and takes pride in her studies. Her extracurricular activities include a myriad of endeavors. She enjoys drawing monuments and reading fiction in her free time. Outside of school, she relishes going to the mall, watching television, and volunteering her time to help people. Keep up the great work, Kylene. You are truly an Illing Star student!!!! Team Central is honored to have you on our team.

## Jennifer Annis

URI would like to recognize Jennifer Annis for Student of the Month. Jennifer is a hard worker who respects the STARS motto. She helps her fellow classmates when they are struggling. She is a member of the Science Club and Drama Club. Jennifer is a sweet and kind student, and URI is glad to have her.

## Liam Chenette

Team Dartmouth is proud to announce Liam Chenette as our student of the month. Liam is an interesting young man who enjoys creating and using his imagination: whether it's writing a story, using technology, or making arts and crafts. College and a possible career in writing are in his future. A recent passion of his is archery, and you can often find him at the local range in Manchester. What we especially value in Liam is his kindness. He is always willing to help a peer by getting someone caught up after an absence, explaining a problem, or lending a pencil.

## Kiara Elias

Team UConn wants to recognize Kiara Elias. Kiara is a wonderful student and person. She puts forth maximum effort and participates during every class. She strives to succeed in every subject area. Also, Kiara always interacts with her peers and school personnel in a positive manner. She sets an excellent example every day. We are proud to have Kiara as a member of team Uconn.

## Linard Jones

Team Princeton nominates Linard Jones as our January Student of the Month. Linard is a shining star on Team Princeton. He is always respectful and compassionate to his peers and teachers. Linard is a mature young man of great integrity. We can count on Linard to always do the right thing, especially when no one is watching. He is a good student and works very hard. In addition to his great citizenship on the team, we see these same characteristics when Linard is in specials or playing basketball for Illing's team. We are so proud of Linard and are very lucky to have him on our team this year! Congratulations Linard Jones - Team Princeton's Student of the Month!

## Junior Lingisi

The music department recognizes Junior Lingisi as January Student of the Month. Junior exemplifies the qualities needed in a developing musician. As a Scholar musician, he is focused on the new skills being presented in class and uses class time to practice the technique to the point of mastery. As an Aware musician, he plays both the keyboard and recorder cognizant of the other musicians with him, maintaining a steady beat, correct rhythms, in tune pitches and proper playing position. He is a Safe and Respectful musician, caring for the instruments and materials provided to him. But Junior is also helpful and kind to others, attentive and positive, and his contributions to class discussions are always on point. Junior Lingisi is a fine representative of Music Survey and Illing Middle School.

# JANUARY STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

## Tiarah Matticks

Team Syracuse recognizes Tiarah Matticks who is a fantastic student and whose writing is spectacular, both on classroom assignments and her own personal stories. She is almost always the first one finished with her work, not because she blows through it just to get it done, but because she refuses to be sucked in by the distractions around her. Even when her peers may be less than focused, she plugs away at the task in front of her. Tiarah's dedication to her own education is admirable; we can't wait to see what levels she attains in the future.

## Cecelia Morttey

Cornell recognizes Cecelia Morttey, who is an ideal student. In her quiet way, she does it all. Completing homework, asking questions to enhance understanding and working with others are only a few of the ways she shows this. In addition to her prominence as a student, her character is notable. She has been seen taking time out of her own work to help other students who struggle. For all these reasons and more, Team Cornell is pleased to name Cecelia their January Student of the Month!

## Victoria Rivera

Team Tufts recognizes Victoria Rivera as the type of person that someone would want to know about. From the moment you meet her you can tell that she is happy. She often skips down the hall in the morning, not to bring attention to herself, but because she is truly happy to be at Illing Middle School. She is polite to everyone, smiles at those who need their day brightened, and is always willing to lend a helping hand. Victoria always puts forth her best effort, whether in academics or in clubs such as Science Club or Poetry Club. Each classroom brightens as she walks into it. She always beats the teacher in saying "good morning/afternoon". Victoria is our Student of the Month in the long, wintry month of January because she brings warmth to Team Tufts.

## Kevin Santos

Kevin is very deserving of recognition as Team Yale's Student of the Month. Kevin is a kind, polite and respectful young man. He is fully committed to his academics as he consistently completes classwork and homework. He is a model student for his classmates to emulate, for Kevin is never afraid to participate in class discussions or to ask a question whenever he needs clarity. Kevin seeks extra help when he needs it and is friendly and helpful to his peers. In addition to being a stellar student and an admirable person Kevin is also a superb singer, serving as a vital member and contributor to Illing's choral group. Team Yale is super proud of Kevin and all his accomplishments!

## Chalaya Winston

The Family Consumer Science department would like to recognize Chalaya Winston. She is a determined student who enjoys having fun, too. Chalaya is on the cheerleading squad where she demonstrates leadership and technique. She is also willing to come after school and get her work done when she is behind. We nominate Chalaya Winston as Student of the Month!

ILLING MIDDLE  
SCHOOL PTA

PTA BOARD:

President—Jack Crockwell

Vice Pres—Sara Cleveland

Treasurer—Andy Kidd

Secretary—Richard Walsh

Membership—Mary Klotzer

MEETING DATES:

Wednesday—May 20, 2015

**MEETINGS ARE HELD**

**IN THE**

**ILLING CAFETERIA**

**FROM**

**7:00 pm TO 8:00 pm**



## PTA NEWS AND INFORMATION

### Membership

Become part of the PTA voice. Joining PTA does not obligate you to volunteer or attend meetings. By joining, you will support Illing Middle School, receive information by e-mail on upcoming events and a monthly summary of the PTA meeting discussion. You will stay informed and involved.

The cost is just \$7 for membership for one adult for the entire school year & \$12 for 2 adults (dads please join!). Students are welcome to join for just \$6.

### CONTACT US

Email the PTSA Board at [IllingMiddleSchoolPTSA@gmail.com](mailto:IllingMiddleSchoolPTSA@gmail.com)

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IllingMiddleSchoolPta>

Visit the Illing Middle School Web Site: <http://publicschools.manchesterct.gov/page.cfm?p=612>

The Illing PTA organized a Box Tops for Education collection in December that raised \$472.80 for the school! There is one more opportunity this school year to earn funds, and the PTA is organizing one more contest. Box Tops must be turned in by February 25th, and the 7th and 8th grade teams turning in the most Box Tops will win a dress down day on Friday, February 27th. Many thanks to Ms. Weekes and the PTA for taking the time to organize this program.



## ***From the Literacy and Numeracy Coaches...***

*Danielle Maguire, Claudia Millette, Paige LePage*

### **Breakfast Club**

Need a little extra help on last night's homework? A quick re-view for your quiz or test today? Getting organized before you start your day? Come on up to the media center before school to get some help!!

Help is available on Monday and Wednesday from 7:15 a.m. - 8:10 a.m. and on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 7:45 a.m. - 8:10 a.m.

Feel free to grab your breakfast and join us!!

### **Mathletes and Reading All-Stars**

We are very excited to introduce a new after school program called **Mathletes and Reading All-Stars!!** Students who attend will receive homework help and academic support to improve grades and performance in reading and/or math. The intent of this program is to prepare students for the rigor of high school and beyond, and we have a very talented pool of teachers who are dedicated to helping your child succeed.

This free, grant-funded program will provide support based on individual student needs and the teacher working with your child will track progress over time to monitor his/her success. We will incorporate a variety of student-centered, hands-on activities and learning experiences intended to improve academic skills and confidence in the areas of reading and math. Afternoon sessions will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays immediately after school and will run until four o'clock. Students will receive a snack upon arrival, and late bus service will be available. Morning sessions will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 7:15 - 8:00. Students will be allowed to purchase breakfast before attending class on team.

Spots are limited! If you are interested, please contact us at (860) 647-5016.

